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SENATE Public Health
Exhibit No. 3
Date 4-3-2013
Bill No. HJ16



HELENA COLLEGE

University of Montana

April 3, 2013

To whom it may concern at the Montana State Legislature:

I am a professor of psychology at Helena College University of Montana. I have been involved in the mental health system of Montana for many years. I am not able to make the current hearing on HJ16 in the senate committee hearing so please accept this written statement.

As all of you are surely aware the mental health system in Montana has long struggled with seemingly recalcitrant problems: over census at the State Hospital, too many mentally ill in prison, shortages of mental health providers, high suicide rates, etc. Making changes to only parts of the mental health system will not be effective in alleviating these problems. What is necessary is a whole new mental health delivery approach.

That is exactly what this bill is to investigate. I would like to inform you that there are evidence-based effective delivery systems that may be applicable to Montana. Alternative mental health care delivery models have been utilized not only in other states but in places such as India and African nations. These practices would have to be modified to meet our unique needs, and that is what would be studied under this bill.

I strongly urge you to support this bill. It has minimal if any risk and potentially could benefit the mental health of Montana's citizens and provide high quality care in a cost effective manner.

Please feel free to contact me with questions.

Thank you,



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